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ACCELERATION AND CATASTROPHE – SCHISMOGENESIS (DELEUZE/GUATTARI) VS. DEATH METAPHYSICS (NICK LAND).

MASHINES, ACCELERATION, CATASTROPHE, DELEUZE/GUATTARI, ENTROPY,
NECROPOLITICS NEGENTROPY, SCHISMOGENESIS

As a transhumanist, Kurzweil argues that computational devices, particularly those of AI, continue the trend of natural evolution toward the production of ordered information patterns. Whereas the orderliness of natural information processing systems is measured by whether the behavior is suitable for the survival and propagation of the species, in technological evolution it is the economic return that determines the success of a technological innovation. Growth is thus a sign of the acceleration of evolution; it is made possible by new information technologies, with computers and AI being the prerequisite for further progress. Information

technologies are both the result of human learning and the means by which learning processes are optimized and become more productive. According to Kurzweil, AI can accelerate the process of evolution and transformation of reality to infinity.

Nick Land shares with Kurzweil the view that evolutionary change today is driven by the needs of technological development. His anti-humanist-inspired proposal to accelerate the unfolding of techno-capitalism is openly inspired by Deleuze/Guattari's "Anti-Oedipus" when they write that the tendency must be pushed ever further, to the point where capitalism shoots itself and all its streams to the moon. Land concludes that capitalism is a revolutionary process in which desire expresses itself as the "production of production." One should thus push deterritorialization to its absolute limits. Techno-capitalism, Land argues, is a process of technical transformation of evolution that takes the living into an inorganic becoming. Like Kurzweil, Land is convinced that the acceleration of this process depends on the positive feedback loop through which technical innovations, make available ever more efficiently the energetic and economic resources necessary for further evolution. Singularity remains the threshold of absolute deterritorialization, indicating the dissolution of individualized forms in the organless body.

Kurzweil is convinced that the problem of material limits does not arise because technological progress brings not only a better use of resources and thus an increase in efficiency, but also the possibility of using abundant or inexhaustible energy sources (atomic or solar energy).

This ignores the irreversible destruction that accompanies the increase in capitalist production efficiency. There is hardly an economist who takes into account a most important aspect of capitalist productivity, namely the accompanying and sometimes irreversible littering and over-pollution that can be captured as antiproduction. Jason Moore has elaborated on this in his contributions to the Capitalocene. Matter and energy are received in a state of low entropy and leave in a state of high entropy. Certain residues with high entropy can no longer be used in any productive process, technical or natural. Even quake atailles waste program would now reach its limits. Thus, the kinetic flow of capitalist innovation creates not only order but also disorder, at present especially through the use of fossil fuels, which produce waste materials and warm and damage the environment. The more orderly certain technological productions are in terms of efficiency, the more toxic waste they produce. Thus, technological development is by no means an anti-entropic process, as Kurzweil claims. Still, it is important to consider that the more different ways of human knowing and being there are, the more ways there are of dispersing energy that are appropriate and responsive to that particular place.

Solar energy is the primary source of ecosystems, and in natural cycles the waste products produced by one energy conversion process are almost entirely usable by another. A metastable state is maintained by a relative balance of incoming and outgoing energy moving through it. We find these states everywhere in nature: in storm systems, water currents, and all living systems. By incorporating change and feedback into their patterns of motion, metastable systems adapt and persist. Technical systems, on the other hand, accelerate the tendency toward disorder under capitalism. It is a dangerous mistake to believe that human culture is not part of nature or completely free to shape its history. If we take a broad enough view, we can see that its patterns are fractal iterations of other natural patterns.

Unlike Kurzweil, Land acknowledges the dissipative tendency implicit in the evolutionary process of technocapitalism. However, he then proposes to accelerate evolution until the complete dissolution of all organized forms. Thus, entropy is then the expression of the death drive, in which, according to Land, desire consists. Inspired by Deleuze/Guattari, he wants to continue the line of deterritorialization drawn by technological innovation until the organless body, which he understands as the intensity = 0 of chaos, as the difference itself. Entropy is a form of chaos. From this perspective, individualized organizations, in their effort to maintain themselves in their mutually limited forms, inhibit the flow of desire as a tendency toward intense dissipation within the unbounded substance of the organless body. For Land, the organless body is death, wherein the identity of difference (intensity = 0) is desired through the dissipation of differentiated forms (degrees of intensity): Only death desires, and all desire is a desire of death. Techno-capitalism is thus a truly revolutionary force for Land insofar as it accelerates the deterritorialization and entropy by which life is gradually returned to its inorganic essence.

What if capitalism were to implode in and with the circuits of financial circulation, folding in on themselves, indeed think here of Land's cyber-positive feedback loops, teleonomy, etc., and at the same time moving with such vector force as to increasingly obliterate the power potentials of (industrial) capital? This leads to two hypotheses about virtual-financial capital as pure circulation: first, the future of capital as empty and terminal – as Baudrillard writes, no unlimited production, no necessary consumption, no romance of use-value, no exchange-value, no dialectic, just a circuit of digital exchanges moving at the hyper-speed of financial circulation (ie. i.e. thought, light, etc.), or a hyper-capitalism as an explosion of production and a feast of consumption, a period of alternating excess and recession, fetishes everywhere and always, change of all signs without stability because the speed of capitalism has reached the speed of economic dizziness. Probably the former is more likely.

Now what is the situation with Deleuze/Guattari? While acknowledging the anti-production that exists for Land in the organless body and that accompanies the deterritorialization of the capitalist system, they do not propose to obey a metaphysics of death, but on the contrary to respond by fleeing or even destroying the world. For them, the death enterprise is one of the most important and specific forms of surplus value skimming under capitalism. For this, antiproduction is used as a strategy to block the schizoid escape routes. Schizoid escape is the expression of a desire for life that opposes the desire for death.

Land leaves out the distinction, important to Deleuze/Guattari, between molar capitalist machines and molecular desiring machines. There is a gap between the molar regime of the social machine and that of the molecular desiring machine. Contrary to what Land claims, for Deleuze/Guattari the absolutely deterritorialized is not death and chaos as antiproduction. By no means should it also be equated with the full body of money capital, which Deleuze/Guattari qualify with Baudrillard as metastatic. The organless body functions as an abstract matter-machine of repulsion and contraction, as the virtual continuum of variation, as the dissolution or liquidation of psychosocial organization in the direction of a non-actualizable, purely virtual de-organization, in this sense of an anti-production that is a deadly history, so to speak, if capital precisely does not manage, by means of the various procedures of stratification on the capitalist socius, to produce a different kind of recording surface than

that of the organless body. The organless body still operates according to the regimes of order, but it itself consists of a field of pre-actual potentialities, whereby one finds order here at most in the form of tendencies, inclinations, and forces, which, however, do not express themselves precisely by actualizing themselves. In this respect, Deleuze/Guattari can indeed speak of the organless body as anti-production, which, however, is by no means completely opposed to production.

For Deleuze/Guattari, absolute deterritorialization (virtuality) has the purpose of arriving at conditions of individuation that lie beyond capitalist axiomatics. The virtual is a highly idiosyncratic kind of the universal, linked to the singular-individual through generic processes of actualization, that is, through real relations of morphogenetic production. The virtual multiplicity of the immanence plane is a kind of topological space in which the differential relations and singularities (intensities tending to 0) are distributed, which in turn represent the problematic conditions suitable to produce collective individuation processes as a solution. Each area of multiplicity of the plane of immanence is in turn a multiplicity, i.e., each being individuated in a collective arrangement is in turn a singular collective arrangement: this is the meaning of schizophrenia.

For Deleuze/Guattari, moreover, there is no man-nature distinction. It is not man as the king of creation, but rather the one who is touched by the deep life of all forms or species, who is familiar with the stars and the animals themselves, and who ceaselessly connects an organ machine to an energy machine, the sun to the ass. One could argue thus: The human body exhibits fractal patterns in its heartbeat, breathing, eye movements, vascular system, metabolism, speech, and nested brainwave frequencies. The infrastructure of cities and their transportation and utility networks – such as the total length of power lines, roads, gas stations, water and gas lines – are also fractal. Just like giant trees, the frequency of branching roads and fuel lines increases at smaller scales. In this way, urban space resembles the cardiovascular and respiratory systems or the vascular structure of plants and trees. For Baudrillard, the final stage of simulation is characterized by the fractal. Cultural engagement and innovation are anchored in the physical flow architectures of fractal urban networks. These physical networks facilitate and constrain the number of interactions that an average urban dweller can sustain in a city.

The axiomatics of capital consist of expanding the realm of speculative capital processes (deterritorialization), capturing modes of existence that elude capital (decoding), and transforming them back into new and desirable consumer goods (reterritorialization). These processes involve, on the one hand, the constant innovation necessary to counteract the tendency of the rate of profit to fall, and, on the other hand, the destruction through which the lack of more is constantly reproduced within the abundance (anti-production).

Anti-production manifests itself today, in particular, as the production of excess pollution that undermines the ability of ecosystems to sustain life, and as the suppression of ways of life that are less competitive in terms of economic output.

The revolutionary escape that Deleuze/Guattari speak of aims to free itself from the productivity-conforming mode of individuation of capitalist machines through an absolute deterritorialization capable of reaching the level of immanence. It is about desiring machines

capable of producing new forms of singular and collective individuation. Most often, however, creative leaks in capitalism end up fueling the growth of the system, and the desire that feeds them is diverted into the desire for wealth. Money and the market are described by Deleuze/Guattari as the true police of capital. While Deleuze/Guattari call for continuing to challenge the power of axiomatics despite the very low chances of success, Land, on the other hand, calls for multiplying the opportunities of repressive deterritorialization through which the existing is gradually dissolved in the flows of capital.

Growth as the unlimited reproduction of capital threatens the diversity of forms of life and desiring production. For Deleuze/Guattari, the productivity of abstract machines is not to be measured by the reproduction of the same (of capital), but by the diversity of existences, singular and collective, human and non-human. From this perspective, evolution is a process of multiplication of heterogeneous species and ways of life rather than a selective competition that legitimizes the global spread of capital. Differential relations and singularities that form a virtual multiplicity constitute intensive morphogenetic processes by marking system thresholds and transforming the indeterminate differential multiplicity into a determinable field of intensive morphogenetic processes, which in turn is determined by the (spatiotemporal-causal-objective) integration (compression, stabilization, simplification) and resolution (scale, granularity, precision) of the dynamic processual information input in the form of actual things with extension and qualities. There is in Deleuze a meta-physical process ontology that can be linked to an evolutionary-processual explanatory model whose picture of reality is transformational: any worldly process can change as an adaptive response to changes in other corresponding processes in the environment. This might be called schismogenesis, which is a historical process that limits the number of cultural traits that can be passed on through imitation before branching out in new directions. It is the playful and experimental source of all patterns of cultural movement. Mobility is crucial: centripetal movements gather from a periphery to a central region, while centrifugal movements spread out from a center in all directions. Patterns move together and keep apart, like the orbits of planets in our solar system, and elastic patterns expand and contract around an optimal range of motion.

The virtual, or the plane of immanence, is conceived in Deleuze as a topological space that is at once singular and manifold, in which the differential conditions for the intense genesis of a reality are distributed, in which it is differences that express themselves through differentiation. Each thing is a singular expression of multiplicity within a reality that is richer the more heterogeneous bodies it encloses. It follows that the reality produced by the capitalist machine is very poor insofar as its axiomatics constantly realizes only capital through its production. Moreover, the production of this machine is impoverishing insofar as it suppresses and distracts any desire to make an arrangement other than one that corresponds to the circulation of money flows.

If you think of it in terms of mobility, one of the problems of Western capitalism is that you get stuck in one pattern of movement and try to apply it to the whole world, ignoring the geographical and historical specificities of energy dissipation. Increasing the frequency of pattern changes and the geographic diversity of patterns tends to increase cultural and ecological diversity, while imposing a single pattern leads to the destruction of that diversity.

The result is ecological devastation and increasing human misery for most. In the case of capitalist growth, there has been a super-exponential rate of growth of a single pattern that has led to tremendous environmental and epistemicide. I addressed this in my new book, *The Ecstasy of Speculation*, as the tendency toward polycrisis and catastrophe:

“Today, it is speculative capitalization in particular – inextricably linked to the rise of networked computers – that has led to the over as a result of ecstatic excesses of increase. Too much capital, but also too many images and too many signs, neutralizing any historical sense and exercising a white censorship through excess. This kind of simulation through excessive reality overload, which in turn can lead to reality denial, entails a new escalation of obesity (Baudrillard), which finally becomes visible in garbage of all kinds: Nuclear waste, chemical waste, and industrial waste, but also the excess of opinions, laws, and texts that float like cadavers in the stream of the perishable and the corruptible. When Marx wrote that capital is dead labor whose function consists in the continuous and vampiric sucking in of living labor, and that the more living labor it sucks in, the better it lives as a vampire, Marx had only a very faint idea of how capital, with its expansion over two hundred years, could produce a monstrous auto-cannibalism in the course of which it wants to suck up everything for all eternity, until in the end it nevertheless inflates itself to death (and destroys the earth)...

To propose the infinite ecstatic progress (of capital) as the only horizon is the same as asking everyone to wait for Godot. Since we are modern, we live in times of the end or, according to Baudrillard, even after the end. It is not that history has come to an end, but that it has no end in the sense of finality that is at issue in the process of eliminating a horizon of expectation. The absence of a new future radically different from the present configures an end time of present, past and future in contiguity. We live for tomorrow and know that the new tomorrow does not exist. We want to move, always and everywhere, charge ourselves with energies, become faster and faster and ecstatically grow into infinity, even congenially multiply our human capital. Precisely for this reason, the enslaving robot is probably waiting for us. And there will always be someone, even if he is locked in his robotized bunker for 200 years, feeding on jelly and virtual sex, who will then say, “That’s freedom.” But even such end-time dreams, which the catastrophe porn narrates around the clock today, are nothing more than simulacra. Even the apocalypse is over, says Baudrillard, it is today the precession of the neutral and of indifference. One would have to add, but also the precession of ecstasy (of the more and the less): Nothing is possible anymore because nothing is impossible anymore.”

Whoever wants to live in the great energetic pluriverse according to other patterns or a different mixture of patterns, must detach himself from capital. Resistance is always there. It is concentrated and multiplied today in the migrant, an important figure of the surplus proletariat.

translated by deepL.

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